DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 180 733 RC 011 775

TITLE Rural Programs.
INSTITUTION Little (Arthur D.), Inc., Washington, D.C.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.: Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (Dept. of Justice), Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Development (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Jun 79
CONTRACT J-LEAA-013-77
NOTE 35p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Alternative Schools; Community Programs; Counseling Services; *Delinquency Prevention; *Delinquent Rehabilitation; Delinquents; *Delivery Systems; *Demonstration Programs; Family Programs; Foster Homes; Fund Raising; Human Services; Runaways; *Rural Areas; Rural Urban Differences; Volunteers; Youth Problems; *Youth Programs

ABSTRACT

Prepared to help rural communities meet the needs of troubled and delinquent youth, this booklet describes exemplary programs implemented in nine rural areas. The introduction outlines the specific problems faced by rural communities and small towns in providing youth services, i.e., limited resources to focus on youth problems, greater distances between providers and consumers, and few opportunities for information exchange among professionals within a state or region. The selected programs illustrate innovative ways of delivering a variety of services including non-secure detention facilities for status offenders and other troubled youth, meaningful recreation and education for rural youth, counseling, crisis intervention, and support for the families of youthful offenders. Program descriptions provide a brief characterization of the community, the impetus for developing the youth program, and a picture of the youth served and the services provided. The programs described are Mountain Plains Youth Service Coalition, Pierre, SD; Foster Home Program, Hamilton, MT; Day and Residential Services for Youth, Opelousas, LA; Rural Transportation Program, Council Bluffs, IA; Alternative School, David, KY; Non-Secure Detention Facility, Marquette, MI; Drop-In Center, Jackson, WY; Family Partners Program, Decorah, IA; and Youth Specialist, Sterling, CO. (JH)

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rural programs

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Law Enforcement Assistance Administration

U.S. Department of Justice

June 1979

RC 011775

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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RURAL PROGRAMS

Prepared for

The Office of Juvenile Justice
and Delinquency Prevention

The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration

U.S. Department of Justice

This project was supported by Contract Number J-LEAA-013-77, awarded to Arthur D. Little, Inc., Washington, D.C., by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

May, 1979

FOREWORD

Rural communities face special difficulties in developing services and alternatives for young people who come in contact with the juvenile justice system. One of the most significant problems is isolation -- isolation from other towns and villages, isolation of professionals from others working with youth, and isolation of community members from each other. A second problem is severe resource limitations, not only resources to develop innovative programs but basic resources to provide children with such things as parks, movies, and playing fields.

This booklet describes what nine rural communities have done to meet youth needs. The book is intended to demonstrate what can be done with energy and ingenuity as well as to recognize nine outstanding efforts.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is committed to helping all youth and in particular troubled youth. It is also committed to assisting communities including rural areas to meet their youth needs. It is our hope that rural communities will use these ideas, and their own to expand our knowledge of what strategies work best for rural youth. Also, we hope this small booklet helps to combat the isolation which can be so detrimental to our children in rural areas.

David West
Acting Associate Administrator
Office of Juvenile Justice and
Delinquency Prevention

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RURAL PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, as amended, calls for funds to be made available for "advanced techniques in developing, maintaining, and expanding programs and services designed to prevent juvenile delinquency, to divert juveniles from the juvenile justice system, to provide community-based alternatives to juvenile detention and correctional facilities, to encourage a diversity of alternatives within the juvenile justice system, and to establish and adopt juvenile justice standards."

This goal, and others in the Act are supported by financial and technical assistance authorized by the Congress.

In assessing the needs of communities and states participating in the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, it has become clear that rural communities and small towns confront problems serving youth that their urban neighbors do not face. Some of these difficulties are:

- fewer resources -- financial and staff -- to focus on youth problems. Also, fewer employment and recreational opportunities for youth.
- greater distances between providers and consumers complicating the delivery of regular, frequent services. Distances also affect administrative costs of doing business in rural areas.
- fewer opportunities for information exchange among professionals within a state or region.

These obstacles can be formidable and it is not surprising that many rural communities are wary of their ability to provide alternatives to incarceration for juveniles in trouble and of their ability to develop the "advanced techniques" in juvenile justice as called for in the Act. However, a number of rural communities are doing exactly that. The purpose of this booklet is to describe nine such programs -- the community in which they reside, the children they serve, and the services they provide. It is hoped that these programs will serve as examples to other small towns and rural areas; that their optimism about what can be done for youth will inspire other communities addressing similar problems.

To locate promising projects in rural areas and small towns, we contacted juvenile justice planners of state planning agencies in rural states. They were asked to recommend programs or efforts that were addressing some of the major concerns of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. These projects were contacted by phone and a lengthy interview was conducted. Program literature was also reviewed. We did not evaluate these projects -- if the state planners and local project staff felt the effort was productive, if they could point to evidences of improved conditions for youth in trouble, and if the project approaches appeared worthy of consideration by others in juvenile justice, it was included. We have described here just nine projects. There are many other rural efforts of which we have become aware. This booklet represents just the beginning of an effort to bring experiences -- both good and bad -- of rural America to the fore.

Rural America, like urban America, is not a homogenous entity. While small towns may be comparable in terms of population, economy, and resources, the forms which these communities take vary considerably. This diversity is reflected in the programs discussed in this booklet. The largest city which is represented is Council Bluffs, Iowa -- with a population of about 100,000. While Council Bluffs is too large to be considered rural itself, the outlying communities which its transportation project serves are small and quite rural. On the other end of the spectrum, we have included an alternative education program located in David, Kentucky. The education program serves three counties, but the town of David only has about 100 residents.

We queried each project about the economy of the area it serves. No community could be considered industrial -- the activities of the areas included: agriculture, tourism, lumber and wood production, and mining

None of the communities, save for Council Bluffs, had extensive human service systems. Resources for youth were very limited, but the youth needs were perceived as serious enough for a response beyond what the community was then providing.

IMPETUS FOR RURAL PROGRAMS

What impetus impelled communities to develop special youth programs? Many factors contributed to these efforts. In some towns, it was in response to a crime problem: in Sterling, Colorado, local businessmen became frustrated at the incidence of vandalism and formed a task force to address the problem; in Hamilton, Montana, the court was overburdened with referrals.

In two programs, the judges recognized the need for better services for youth. In Opelousas, Louisiana, the Judge felt that children in trouble required assistance that the criminal justice system simply could not provide. Probate judges in Michigan voiced concern over a lack of non-secure detention alternatives, and out of their concern was born the facility in Marquette, Michigan.

Finally, in some communities it was the residents themselves who were major contributors to the program's initiation: in David, Kentucky, the alternative school grew out of a desire to give teens recreation programs for the weekends. The volunteers helping out discovered that many of these youths had educational needs and desires which were not being filled by the school system, and thus, the alternative school program was begun.

RESOURCES

The programs developed in response to the needs described above draw their funding from every conceivable source. For example:

- Local Government - contributes to the Youth Specialist in Sterling, Colorado -- that post is a department of town government.
- State Government - contributes funds for children in foster care in Montana through the State Department of Corrections.
- Federal Government - provided initial funds for a van for the Council Bluffs, Iowa, transportation program. LEAA, OJJDP and CETA are just a few of the federal sources consulted.
- Private Sources - contribute funds to the Mountain Plains Youth Service Coalition to help it in its youth work.

By far the most impressive resource of these programs is volunteers. Many of the rural communities with which we spoke take it as a point of pride that volunteerism is an oft-used resource. We gained valuable insights into the use of volunteers from these projects.

- Peers as volunteers can be very effective. The Youth Specialist in Sterling, Colorado, employs volunteer teenagers to instruct children in the problems of vandalism.

- Volunteers can provide a range of talent. The alternative education program in Kentucky was staffed, almost exclusively, with volunteer teachers. In Jackson, Wyoming, volunteer craftsmen and sportsmen donate their time to teach children their talents. This includes mountain climbing, carpentry, and other activities.

- Some of the most effective volunteers are those who have never worked in human service areas. In Docorah, Iowa, the project director looks for volunteers with non-human service backgrounds to work with families in crisis. It has been their experience that retired human service providers may be less interested or "burned out". Retired electricians, plumbers, factory workers, and others are often eager to use the personal skills involved with helping a youth in need.

- Retired or volunteer law enforcement officers can be of value as volunteers for youth in trouble. In Council Bluffs, the transportation program is exploring the use of deputized volunteer sheriffs to help drive the children to detention or other programs.

The creative use of people -- in ways described above and in other ways -- seemed to be a hallmark of these rural programs. Volunteers also reaffirm communities' desires to solve their own problems, independent of extensive involvement from outsiders.

Despite the interesting ways in which these communities are addressing their youth problems, resources -- and, more specifically, funds for services -- continue to be a pressing problem. Often, these small communities cannot, or feel they cannot, compete with the more densely populated cities. The response of the Mountain Plains Youth Service Coalition to this problem is a useful one which rural areas ought to consider. The Coalition founders -- recognizing the disadvantages which its members had in competing for federal dollars -- became the recipient of a runaway youth project grant. It now acts as the funnel of dollars to small programs throughout the region. The rural runaway projects, thereby, need not compete as individual programs. Coalitions of this sort may make eminent sense in rural areas.

THE PROGRAMS

The nine program descriptions which follow include the following:

- Mountain Plains Youth Service Coalition, Pierre, South Dakota.
- Foster Home Program, Hamilton, Montana.

- Day and Residential Services for Youth, Opelousas, Louisiana.
- Rural Transportation Program, Council Bluffs, Iowa.
- Alternative School, David, Kentucky.
- Non-Secure Detention Facility, Marquette, Michigan.
- Drop-In Center, Jackson, Wyoming.
- Family Partners Program, Decorah, Iowa.
- Youth Specialist, Sterling, Colorado.

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Pierre, South Dakota 57501
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NETWORK OF RUNAWAY SERVICES

The Mountain Plains Youth Services Coalition provides a number of services to small towns, rural communities, and Indian reservations in the Rocky Mountain/Big Sky part of the country. The Coalition was founded to help overcome the isolation which many small communities feel -- isolation in terms of an inability to share information and ideas with like-interested groups. One of the first efforts which the Coalition undertook was the development of the Rural Route Runaway Network.

Competition for federal funds is especially difficult in rural areas, because no one community has the numbers or statistics often necessary to compete with larger communities. Although numbers are not impressive by comparison to cities, rural areas and rural youth can still benefit greatly from federal programs. It was with this in mind that the states of this region banded together to apply for funds made available under the Runaway Youth Act administered by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Ten communities which are members of the Coalition receive funding under this Act. In eight of the ten towns, the money flows to the projects from the Coalition. The other two sites receive their money directly. These towns include:

- Rapid City, South Dakota
- Sioux Falls, South Dakota
- Aberdeen, South Dakota
- Huron, South Dakota
- Laramie, Wyoming
- Great Falls, Montana
- Billings, Montana
- Anaconda, Montana
- Helena, Montana
- Steamboat Springs, Colorado

The ten runaway projects are similar in that they each address the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Youth Development Bureau's mandated goals. These are:

1. to alleviate the immediate problems of runaway youth,

2. to reunite youth with their families and encourage resolution of intra-family problems,

3. to strengthen family relationships and encourage stable living conditions for youth, and

4. to help young people decide upon a future course of action.

Each program was added to an existing service provider or sponsor in the town. This lends considerable variety to the oragnization of these programs. For instance, the Rapid City runaway project is attached to the activities of the local Girls Club. In another community, sponsorship of the host homes is done through the Junior League. In this way, the runaway programs gain the credibility of their parent agency. They do not come to the community perceived as short-term, limited-funding projects. There is a greater likelihood that they will be accepted by the residents and the local political structure.

The role of the Coalition, through the Rural Route Runaway Network is to:

- Arrange for funding for eight of the ten projects. Funds are sent to each recipient at the beginning of a four month period out of which they pay their bills. This helps with cash flow, a problem which small projects often face. The projects then account for funds with the Coalition. The projects receive different grant amounts, depending on need. The grants range in size from $4,500 to $22,000.

- Provide technical assistance and training. The Coalition sponsors training to address problems common to the runaway projects. For example, planning is now underway to provide training in family crisis intervention. Another instance of assistance is in the design of a poster for each project to use to publicize its activities.

- Act as liaison with the federal and state governments. Many rural communities and small towns have very limited experience with the federal government and with state government agencies. The staff of the Coalition understands these bureaucracies and the legislation which supports programs they administer. Thus, the Coalition can negotiate agreements, gain access to information, and otherwise service the small communities.

The staff of the Coalition includes: an Executive Director, a Training Coordinator and Communciations Specialist, an Assessment Project Coordinator, a part-time student and a secretary. Total staff salaries are $54,500.

When asked about problems which the Coalition faced, the Project Director mentioned the following. First, he said that having the Board of Directors spread out among the states (the Board is made up of representatives from member projects) makes meeting difficult and expensive. Second, the Director would advocate a Board which included members who did not represent the interests of individual projects. Finally, funding continues to be a problem for the Coalition as a whole. The Coalition has found that it must continually seek project grants to help offset the administrative and indirect costs of doing business. Each runaway project contributes to the administrative costs of the Coalition. Additionally, each member organization pays annual dues of $10. Some of the funding problems have been offset by the recent award of a $20,000 grant from the Northwest Area Foundation. Still, fundraising is an ongoing responsibility the Coalition must face.

Foster Homes
Youth Court Probation Office
Court House
Hamilton, Montana 59840
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Contact: David Demmons

FOSTER HOMES

The Bitterroot Valley is a lumber and agricultural county of Montana. It is located about 45 miles south of Missoula, one of the larger towns in this very rural state. The county seat is in Hamilton, a town of about 10,000 situated in the 85 mile long valley.

The youth problem in Bitterroot Valley is not one of hard core delinquents, but rather of acting out youth, vandalism, and, to a much lesser degree, serious crimes such as theft and burglary. The Youth Court Probation Office in Hamilton (which began this foster care program) had 600 referrals last year for services.

In Montana, youth in need of supervision (YINS) are referred to the court for handling. Given the commitment of the state to reduce placements of these status offenders in secure facilities, the need for alternatives is great. However, very small towns do not have the population to support alternatives like group homes, drop-in centers, etc. Thus, another program type -- like foster care -- was warranted.

The foster family program in Hamilton is operated by the Deputy Probation Officer of the Fourth Judicial District Juvenile Court of Ravalli County. In setting up the program, the probation officer worked with the Foster Home Coordinator in Missoula. This Coordinator's position is funded by the three-county area encompassing Lake County, Missoula County, and Ravalli County. The steps which were taken in implementing the program are listed below.

1. A determination of the number of foster care beds needed was made. The probation officer reviewed all the cases of youth placed in jail to decide how many could have been put in foster care, had it been available.

2. A publicity campaign was initiated to generate interest in foster care. Interviews were conducted on local radio stations and articles were written for the newspaper. Also, the Probation Officer spoke before various community groups on the need for short-term foster care (defined as 30 days or less).

3. The Probation Officer received six or so inquiries -- three of which were referred to the local welfare agency because the potential foster parents wanted younger children with somewhat different problems. The remaining three families were recruited, of which two are now acting as foster parents. The recruitment procedures involved a visit from the Foster Care Coordinator who interviewed the families and conducted the licensing procedures as required by law.

4. Though no formal training was offered to the parents, the Probation Officer and the Foster Care Coordinator spent a great deal of time with the families explaining the nature and objectives of short-term shelter care, telling them that planning would proceed on the child's future living arrangements, and informing them that placements would often be made at unusual hours of the day. When a child is placed, (assuming it is not 3:00 a.m.) the youth, the Probation Officer, and the foster parents together discuss the terms of the child's placement and his rights and responsibilities.

To assuage some of the initial concerns of foster families, the probation officer had to personally vouch for the safety of the placement -- including any possible threat which the child would place on the family. His criterion, as he explained to the families, was "would I have this child in my own home?" Thus, the officer asks the families to trust his personal judgement in accepting a child. Because the town is small and his reputation is good, that guarantee has proven enough.

Children who are placed in a foster home must agree to stay there at least one full day. Some youths indicate that they would prefer being placed in the juvenile facility, which they understand, rather than a foster home which is unknown. Still, the placements have gone well.

Each child placed in foster care has his case reviewed the next day by the Probation Officer. In every case, an attempt is made to return the child home; if that is not possible, a longer term arrangement is made.

The foster care program in Bitterroot Valley has had no serious problems since it was started. Initially, the probation officer did extensive legwork to set the program up -- including explanations and discussions with the juveniles, their families, the foster families, and the court. However, the program has now operated for almost five years and is an accepted service of the community.

The decision to use foster care rather than a group home was based on cost considerations. Foster care relies on existing resources of homes and community residents. A retainer of $30 a month is paid to the foster parent to have a bed always available. If it is used, the family is paid an additional $8 per night. Administrative costs are part of the salary of the Probation Officer, paid by the county. Payment for the foster home beds are made by the families of youth. If they are unable to pay, the State Department of Institutions, Corrections Division, assumes the cost. In most cases, the families have been willing to pay. If they were not able, they were willing to sign the required parental agreement which allows the welfare office to pay.

The program has had its advantages and disadvantages. On the down side is the fact that the Probation Officer cannot know every child for whom he must make a placement. The assessments are, of necessity, subjective and, while there have been no real difficulties to date, this is potentially problematic. Second, a number of the placements turn out to be longer term than originally anticipated. The child can develop attachments to his foster family and the later separation can be painful. In one case, a child returned to his natural family and ran away from home to rejoin his foster family.

Despite these disadvantages, the benefits have been impressive. A very obvious value of the program is keeping youth out of secure detention when it is not warranted. Since the program began in 1975, 99 youths have used the services of the foster homes. A second, less obvious strength of the program is information concerning the youth which the program receives from the foster families. Their objective assessments of the childrens' problems and needs have been very useful in developing a long term program for the youth.

St. Landry Juvenile
Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 242
Opelousas, Louisiana
(318) 942-9576
Contact: John Hotard

DAY AND RESIDENTIAL SERVICES FOR YOUTH

Opelousas, a town of 25,000 is located in the largest county (geographically) of Louisiana. The town is the county seat of this rural area. While Opelousas has a number of professionals and small businessmen, the principal concern of the region is farming.

In the last three years, two new programs for juvenile offenders have been instituted. The first was a Counselling and Referral Program. The Opelousas City Court felt that probation was not adequate to solve the problems of children in trouble. A number of youths were reappearing before the judge and he took a personal interest in beginning an alternative program for these youths. It was thought that a Counselling and Referral Program lodged outside the criminal justice system would be better able to address the causes of youth's problems, not just the symptoms. In instituting this effort, program planners were looking toward the future when they would open a group home to provide longer term assistance to youth in trouble with the law.

The Counselling and Referral Program was designed to address both crisis and long term needs of Opelousas youth. By locating the program in Opelousas, children could be kept in the homes and near their families, one of the main objectives of the program.

In December 1978, the group home -- La Garconierre -- opened. The formal opening of the home was the happy culmination of a long and difficult start-up period. The first real struggle which program planners faced was the location of a house. Neighborhood resistance was strong at the outset and a few locations had to be abandoned. The program finally found a house, in a downtown neighborhood, which it renovated as a group home. This house had the added advantage of being just one block from the Opelousas City Court building.

After the house was located, the program planners faced a second, more trying problem associated with renovating the building. Initially, a local contractor was going to donate some services to fixing up the building. This did not work out, and the program had to pay for those services. It was originally anticipated that the work take a few weeks -- which dragged on to three months. The project director attributes the delays to poor initial planning as well as a failure to anticipate all the requirements imposed by various building inspectors -- health, fire, etc. The cost of the work was also much greater than anticipated -- $45,000 total. More efficient planning might have reduced that figure.

Despite some of these problems, the project made some very wise decisions which have proved beneficial. One example is on the composition of its Board. Included are the local judge, the Chief of Police, an architect (who helped develop ideas for the renovation) and an influential local lawyer. Members of the Board contribute their time to the program -- supporting its activities and providing technical assistance when requested.

Community support for the program has been very strong. The local City Councils and the police jury (the parish or county's equivalent of a Board of Supervisors) give money to the program. Civic groups have also lent their hand in fundraising. Groups such as the Civic League and the Civic Circle have held events -- a tennis tournament and a swim-a-lap -- to raise money for the program. The local district attorney has also expressed interest in supporting the program, should state legislation pass giving District Attorneys funds to disburse for criminal justice programs.

The group home provides a range of services for its residents. These include: individual and group counselling (with the youths and their families), academic counselling including placements in regular classrooms or trade schools, and recreational programs. These services are continually being assessed and improved. For example, a request has been made of the school board to provide a teacher with expertise in the problems of maladjusted youths. Recreational options are also being explored. Recreation poses especially acute problems because of the limited activities in town (the town doesn't have a bowling alley or other such recreations).

The staff of the group home consists of an executive director, a program director, three counsellors and two proctors who work during the evening shift. One secretary provides clerical support. The counselling program shares the same executive director and has, in addition, two counsellors. Funding for the two efforts come from four

sources: the Federal government (through an LEAA grant and the funding of CETA positions), state government through the Offices of Human Development and Youth Services, plus local and private funds as mentioned above. The cost of the group home is estimated to be $100,000 a year. The Counselling and Referral Program costs $20,000 each year.

The active caseload of the Counselling and Referral Program is 60. It is anticipated that between twenty and twenty-five youths will use the group home in a year -- the house has a 10 bed capacity and it is anticipated that residents will remain with the program for three to six months.

Rural Transportation
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RURAL TRANSPORTATION

The Christian Home Association and the local Department of Social Services in Council Bluffs has been actively advocating the use of alternatives to jails for status offenders and other troubled youth since 1973. What these organizations soon discovered is that police and sheriff departments in the outlying rural areas were continuing to incarcerate youth, despite officially reported information to the contrary. The Christian Home Association vowed to make it so easy to use alternatives that secure detention would be minimized. To do so, it was necessary to overcome one of the largest problems faced in rural areas -- that of transporting youth to non-secure alternatives.

The Christian Home Association decided to apply for a grant from the Iowa Crime Commission to purchase a van. The total cost of the van was $8,800. In developing the idea, the Christian Home Association got local support from the Human Service Advisory Committee (made up of representatives of social and human service agencies in the Council Bluffs area). The Home also appealed to the County Board of Supervisors for its endorsement. The agreement reached was that the Christian Home would own and operate the van (the Home put up the 10% or $880 local match for the vehicle) and it would be responsible for insurance and keeping the van in good order. However, other organizations would be allowed to use the van, if it was available. Also, should anything happen to the Christian Home, the van would revert to the County Board for ownership.

The purpose of having the van is, first and foremost, to get youth out of jails. Other priority uses to which it is put include transporting youth to and from court hearings and taking youth to school and home when they are involved in justice system processing. Other departments use the van for such tasks as transporting youth to clinics (by visiting nurses), transporting youth to day care so parents withouth cars can attend parent education classes (by the

Alternative Living Center), and taking children to the zoo (by juvenile court probation officers).

The van system of transporting youth has gained a lot of supporters. While there are still some sheriffs who believe in locking up the youths, the problem is diminishing. In part, this is due to the support for the program which the Christian Home has gotten from the Council Bluffs Sheriff who is the recognized leader among law enforcement agencies in the fourteen county area served by the van. This Sheriff has advocated use of the vehicle as an alternative to detention and has thus garnered the support needed by others to make it work.

The van is located at the Christian Home in Council Bluffs, Iowa. While Council Bluffs is a medium sized city of around 100,000, the county area it serves is quite rural, with the largest towns having populations of under 10,000. The van covers a 50-mile radius and has transported youth up to 250 miles (one child was taken to Minnesota to view a program for possible placement).

The procedure followed for deploying the van is relatively simple. The Christian Home keeps a schedule of when the van is obligated and to where it is going. If a sheriff has a child who must be picked up he will call the appropriate agency (Probation, Welfare, or the Christian Home). That agency will then request use of the van and will then make a pick-up. The most difficult problem faced by the program is always having someone available at the Christian Home to transport youth. The transportation effort currently has 24-hour coverage, through the staff of the Christian Home. However, if just one person is out sick, then the problem of coverage becomes acute, especially during the evening and night hours. Therefore, the Home is looking into alternative sources of drivers. One possible source may be the seventy volunteer sheriffs in Council Bluffs. These are trained sheriffs who have other primary jobs, but who might be interested in earning some extra money. The Home is considering paying those drivers on an hourly basis. Also, the Home is exploring whether the transportation service can be hooked up with the 911 emergency exchange. Requests for service would come into the office which would then dispatch a driver and the van.

Insurance, often a problem with programs such as these, has not been difficult to arrange. The company which insures the Christian Home knows of its youth-shuttling role and does not object -- but to date, the insurance company has not been asked to handle any claims. Thus, the project director at the Christian Home is aware that insurance does pose a potential problem.

The David School
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David, Kentucky 41616
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ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

The idea for founding an alternative school in this rural mining town (David has a population of 100) grew in response to the need to give the children of the area something to do on the weekends. From a weekend program, the effort expanded to a teenage day care center, and from that to a full-fledged academic program. Despite some initial concern over how committed to school the youths would be, the program has thrived with its educational thrust. While many students did not do well in the regular classroom, they have responded favorably to the alternative setting where courses are tailored to their individual needs and interests.

The school is located in David and serves the three counties of Knott, Magoffin and Floyd. The thirty regular students at the school come from all three counties. They are transported to school by the faculty members, each of whom drives an hour or so in the mornings and in the afternoons to get the children to and from class. In addition to the children who come to David for classes, there are twenty or so students who receive instruction in their homes. These include youths who are sick or pregnant or unable to attend school for other reasons. The age of these youths range from 14 to 22. Youths are enrolled in the program based on their educational needs. Children who can succeed in public school are not accepted unless they have emotional or family problems which the school can help with. Students are referred to the David School by the Child Welfare Department, the court or are self- or family- referred. Some youth must be turned away to limit class size to ensure quality education tailored to individual needs to conserve money for the program.

When asked what the largest problem facing the school was, the school representative mentioned the children's families. Many parents of children attending the David School are uneducated and are unconvinced of the value of school for their children. When these attitudes combine with an unhappy home situation of divorce, unemployment, and alcoholism, it is very difficult for the child to learn.

The David School has been operational for five years, so it is too early to measure its impact on the community. Originally, the school's founders thought that the students would be older, returning to the classroom for G.E.D. certification. This has not been the case. While the students range in age from 14 to 22 years, the school is serving a younger group than originally anticipated. Thus, it will be a few years until the first "class" graduates and the school's influence can be assessed.

Non-Secure Detention Facility
Director of Children Services
Marquette County Juvenile
County Court House Annex
Marquette, Michigan
(906) 228-8500
Contact: Sherry Myers

NON-SECURE DETENTION

The Probation Judges serving the Upper Peninsula of Michigan recognized a need for non-secure detention facilities in a meeting which they convened to discuss the placement of children during the adjudication process. It was decided that an open facility should be built and located in Marquette, Michigan, the largest county in the area. Marquette is located on the southern shore of Lake Superior. The town has a population of 26,000 (in a county of about 75,000). The business of the region is iron mining and the development of wood products.

The detention facility has a 12-bed capacity. The building has two wings and can serve both boys and girls. The youth are sent to the facility at any point in the hearing process -- from those awaiting a preliminary hearing to those awaiting placement after adjudication. The children housed there are status offenders and delinquents, including some who have committed serious offenses such as armed robbery. The average length of stay is 8 days and the facility is kept between 85% to 90% full.

The staff of the program is headed by a supervisor who lives with his family at the facility. The family's presence has been noted as one of the reasons why the detention facility has been well kept. The children sense that the place is a home -- for example, meals are served family style and the youth have shown the home respect.

Other staff include child care workers -- at least two are on-call all the time and are drawn from a pool of 18-20 total workers available; and assistant supervisors. The children staying at the facility are required to keep their own rooms clean and also contribute to the upkeep of the place. For vacuuming, shoveling snow and other chores, the youth are paid through the Michigan State Child Care Fund.

The Marquette Intermediate School District also provides staff support in the form of a teacher (qualified to teach the emotionally disturbed) who works at the facility.

When the decision to build the non-secure detention facility was made, there was some adverse reaction from the community. However, this concern was assuaged through the holding of public meetings at which the program was explained. The negative reaction was also mitigated because the facility was to be built on public (county), not private, land. Now that the non-secure detention facility is a reality, there is no problem with the community. While community residents have not become very involved with the program, there have been some evidences of their support. For instance, service clubs in the area have volunteered on occasion to work with the youth, such as conducting special art projects. Also, the detention home has received sports equipment, a pool table and other items through donations.

On-site volunteers have not played a significant role in the detention program. This is because there is adequate staff coverage, and the staff do not want to spread themselves thin by getting involved with volunteer management.

The 1978 annual budget for the program was $186,000. This cost is divided equally between the state and the local communities. On a per-child basis, the cost is $50 a day to be picked up by the child referring agency (such as the Department for Social Services).

The person we contacted at this program is very pleased with the way it operates. The only real problem mentioned was a practical one -- high electricity bills since the place is electrically heated. Our contact says that the non-secure home concept has worked well. A real plus has been to have a family in residence. The facility has a "home" feeling, reinforced by non-institutional furniture and surroundings and good food. The fact that the program has worked well is borne out by a very low runaway rate from the facility. In 1977, only 3% ran away, and in 1978 only 4% ran away.

N.E. Iowa Probation Services
Box 376
Decorah, Iowa 52101
(319) 382-2966
Contact: Randy Ovel

FAMILY PARTNERS

> Help Wanted: Family Partner to work with area families 10-20 hours per week. Experience in having raised a family preferred. Contact Northeast Iowa Probation Services, Box 376, Decorah, Iowa 52101. Phone 382-2966.

This is an ad which has run in local newspapers to get volunteers for the Family Partners Program in Decorah, Iowa. The program is run by the Northeast Iowa Probation Services which encompasses a six-county area of predominantly rural farmland. While the entire area has a population of approximately 100,000, no one community has over 8,000 people. Each county seat throughout the district has a Probation Officer who takes direction and guidance from the central office located in Decorah.

The six-county area has a very active tradition of volunteerism. In 1974, each probation office recruited and trained adults to work one-on-one with the youth in trouble. These volunteers would work one to five hours a week. Their services would include arranging recreation and other activities or simply acting as a friend with a sympathetic ear. It was this volunteer program which was the forerunner of the Family Partners Program.

The youth problem in this six-county area is not concentrated in the towns or the farms, but is scattered throughout. It is manifested in such behavior as alcohol consumption, drug use (minimal, but still evident) and property crimes such as vandalism. Probation Officers have indicated that there are few crimes against persons committed by juveniles in the area.

The volunteer program which was begun in 1974 was successful, and thus was an activity worth sustaining and building on. However, as time

went on, Probation Officers noticed that the younger brothers and sisters of offenders were commiting crimes and coming to the attention of the police and the courts. Thus, the problems of many youth were viewed in the larger context of problems with families. The Family Partners concept was designed to work with the whole family unit, not any one member. In addition to this shift in thinking on the part of the probation workers, families in the communities responded favorably to the volunteer programs and began seeking help for myriad problems, beyond difficulties with a recalcitrant child. Thus, the demand for expanded volunteer services was manifested and the probation officer, through the Family Partners program, sought to fill the need.

The volunteers recruited for Family Partners are, by and large, retired people who live or who have moved to the communities in Northeast Iowa. They are recruited for a particular family assignment after a Probation Officer in a field office has requested a partner from the central office in Decorah. The Program Supervisor then reviews the case with the Probation Officer and follows a recruitment process which includes the following:

- The need for a volunteer is advertised, usually through a want ad placed in the local newspaper. The Program Supervisor is currently interested in developing a poster to advertise the Family Partners' program at work sites where potential volunteers may come from.

- The Program Supervisor speaks with volunteers currently working for the probation office for suggestions of Family Partners.

- The Program Supervisor speaks with community officials and Volunteer Probation Aides who may know the kind of person needed for the Family Partners' program.

- From the list of names generated, candidates are screened and the final Partners are selected.

This whole process takes from three to four weeks.

The crucial feature of this program is finding people who are eager to work with children and parents in trouble. The Program Supervisor has found that retirees who have had technical backgrounds make good volunteers in that the interpersonal demands are new to them and

they bring a fresh perspective to problem solving.

Training of the Partner occurs on an ongoing basis with the Probation Officer. The Partner makes the first home visit with the Probation Officer. Then, the Partner and the Probation Officer meet weekly to discuss short-term goals and share problems and develop solutions.

Between October and December of 1978, four families were identified by Probation Officers as good candidates for the Family Partners' Program. Follow-up monitoring shows that three suitable Partners were located, two of which are continuing to work with their families. The third Partner/family relationship did not work out. The family situation was extremely stressful, exacerbating the task of the Partner. Another difficulty encountered with this third family, and which is a problem that has plagued the entire program, is one of transportation. The Partner lived 22 miles from the family -- a distance which was not insignificant, given the harsh Iowa winter.

Below are descriptions of four Partners and the families which they were matched with:

1. A 64-year-old male, retired from furnace work, was matched with a family of five children living with both of their parents in a rural farm setting. The Partner lives 10 miles from the family and works 10 hours a week through two visits with them.

2. A 55-year-old male retired from work as an IRS Auditor, was matched with a family of four children whose single parent is a deaf/mute and presently lives with her children in her mother's home. The Partner resides in the same town where "his" family resides.

3. A 64-year-old male (retired from teaching and newspaper editing) was unsuccessfully matched with a family of six children whose parents work full-time on different shifts. The Partner lived 22 miles from " his" family and submitted his resignation without earlier notice after two weeks of work.

4. A fourth family was referred which is composed of three children (diagnosed as learning disabled) who reside with their father, who is employed out of town and commutes each day. The Probation Officer is interested in involving a Partner who will provide some contact

which will not turn into babysitting. A program to involve the father is being developed as Partner applicants are interviewed.

Partners serve two functions. The most important is one of simply listening to family members discuss their problems. The second is to engage the family in outside activities -- hobbies, recreation, etc., which can strengthen the family unit. Each Partner works with his family from six months to a year.. Commitments beyond a year are hard to secure, according to the Program Supervisor. Also, that period of time is usually sufficient. Partners are reimbursed $3/hour for their services. The Program Supervisor estimates that there are approximately 70 work hours per week involved in the program -- including staff and partner's time. The 1978 budget for the program was $19,967.

Drop-In Center
Van Vleck House
P.O. Box 2631
Jackson, Wyoming 83001
(307) 733-6440
Contact: Claire Smith, Martha Marquart

DROP-IN CENTER

Van Vleck House was initially a youth diversion project which was an outgrowth of the Western Wyoming Mental Health Center. Staff at the Mental Health Center realized that no other organization was available to do youth counselling (schools concentrated on academic needs of students). The House is a drop-in center that provides a variety of services to youth in the Jackson community. The services provided include:

- counselling and crisis intervention: (29 youth were helped in a two-month period last year).
- education/classes: such as a youth opportunity class teaching youth skills like babysitting, as well as parent education courses.
- youth employment: the local high school provides long term employment help to youth. The Van Vleck House helps out with finding the youth odd jobs in the community, such as babysitting, shovelling snow, etc.
- special friends: a volunteer program has just been initiated along the Big Brother, Big Sister model. Ten (10) older youth volunteers have just been trained to be friends to younger youth in the community (as young as five years of age) who need help.
- recreation: the program's services include such recreation efforts as dances, rock climbing classes, and arts and crafts. The expertise for some of the specialized activities is donated by craftsmen, outdoorsmen, etc., living in the community.

Program staff do much more than operate the activities described above. The Project Director works with the public assistance office in finding residential placements for youths who must leave home. The Director of Counselling is paid by the local school system (75% of his salary during the school year) and thus is involved with a variety of school-related projects.

The Jackson area is rural, with a population of around 4,500. The principal business of the community is tourism -- the Grand Tetons provide the basis for both winter sports like skiing, as well as summer sports like camping, river rafting, and mountain climbing.

Because of the wide variety of programs offered by Van Vleck House, the Drop-In Center has a broad-based clientele. It serves youth in trouble -- children referred by the courts, the police juvenile office, and the schools. It also is a service for children and families not in trouble. Thus, there is no stigma and, consequently, no negative labeling of those children who participate in the program.

The program has an annual budget of $66,000. There is, currently pending, a proposal to the National Institute of Drug Abuse for additional program funds. If they are received the annual budget may expand. In addition to federal funds, the program is supported by the community through the school's agreement to pay a portion of the salary of the Director of Counselling. However, ongoing funding remains a serious problem faced by the project.

The program's relations with the community are good. A number of merchants and craftsmen have donated goods and services to the House. The police department and the court also support the program and its efforts for the youth of the Jackson area.

Youth Specialist Office
Centennial Square
Sterling, Colorado 80751
(303) 522-6599
Contact: Stan Gorman

YOUTH SPECIALIST

Sterling, Colorado, located in the rural northeast, is a small town of 15,000. The business of the area is primarily agricultural. In 1975, the town was plagued with an unacceptably high rate of vandalism. The 1975 annual report of the police reported 512 incidences of vandalism, a number which increased to 578 in 1976 and remained high in 1977 and 1978. Police statistics also indicated other problems with youth in trouble, enough to make an argument for a full-time specialist focusing on children's issues.

In 1975, a committee was formed to study the problem of vandalism. A recommendation of that committee was that a police officer be designated to handle juvenile problems. This was never instituted and the idea evolved into something far greater -- the designation of a department-level office within the city government to handle youth matters. The program got support from federal sources (LEAA and CETA) as well as local financial support.

The program began in August, 1978. The staffing of the office includes the Youth Specialist (a pyschologist formerly with the mental health clinic serving the region), a CETA-funded outreach worker, and a CETA-funded secretary. It is hoped that the effort and the staff will expand over time.

From August through December, 1978, 79 youths were seen by the Youth Specialist Office. The breakdown of problems experienced by these youths include:

- Runaways or family problems (31%)
- School problems (including truancy) (18%)
- Vandalism and shoplifting (24%)
- Crimes under investigation (12%)

- Alcohol and drug problems (15%).

The Youth Specialist said that his primary function was to divert youth from the juvenile justice system. The police, sheriff departments, schools, and others call the Youth Specialist with children who are candidates for diversion, or who simply are in trouble. The Youth Specialist will assess the case and make recommendations such as warning and release, counselling by the Youth Specialist Office or the mental health clinic, or suggesting that the case be prosecuted. As a result of the intervention of the Youth Specialist, no delinquency petitions have been filed in court since the program began in August. This is indicative of the influence of the Youth Specialist. However, the Youth Specialist may recommend the filing of a petition if it is felt to be the most effective response to a child's problem.

In addition to diversion activities, the Youth Specialist's Office has engaged in some delinquency prevention efforts. One particularly promising project is the "Youth Teaching Youth" program. The Youth Specialist has identified over 30 teenagers interested in working with younger children. These older youths were given from 7 to 10 hours of training in the causes and effects of vandalism. After being trained, the youths themselves developed a program whereby 15 teams of two teenagers each would go into the grammar schools (three are participating) and speak to the children about vandalism. This program has proven quite successful as evidenced by an award of federal funding. With the additional funds, the curriculum will be expanded to include material on alcohol, drugs and tobacco.

Another youth-oriented activity is a newly-funded project which will enable youths themselves to conduct a survey of the county's attitudes toward youth as well as conduct an assessment of youth needs.

Some new prevention activities which Sterling is becoming involved with include:

- police officers going into the schools to discuss the law and law enforcement; and
- a "rent-a-youth" program - - which serves as short-term employment for youth 12 to 15 years of age.

The outreach worker has her own agenda in support of the efforts of the Youth Specialist. Because she was a troubled youth who knew others in trouble, she understands their needs and problems. She is beginning to reach some of these children and hopes to link them up with help they may need. This outreach effort is scheduled for expansion under the terms of a new federal grant.

The Youth Specialist is optimistic about his program. The support from the community has been overwhelmingly positive. The Youth Specialist has a group of 80 volunteer youth and adults working on community projects and developing more youth programs. Numerous articles and editorials have been published in local newspapers. Also, the Youth Specialist has, to date, made over 80 presentations to local groups and organizations to gain support for youth programs and activities. As a result, church groups, businesses, and others have come forward with offers of help, jobs, activities for young people. they have used the Youth Specialist's office as a focal point for planning new efforts. Some areas of need which the office has identified include:

- an education program designed to alter negative attitudes of youth before they enter the criminal justice system or before they are extensively participating in unlawful activities;
- a full-scale program to provide positive volunteer help for children in trouble or those with poor self-images and negative attitudes;
- involvement of youth in solving youth problems;
- ability to reach "street" children who are in trouble;
- providing parental effectiveness services; and
- employment assistance for youth under 16 who do not meet CETA guidelines.

The success of the Youth Specialist effort was not easily won and problems have arisen. One troublesome area has revolved around turf questions -- between Youth Specialist and mental health and the police. However, these difficulties are being worked out.

Another difficulty is funding. While the Youth Specialist is fully integrated with local government and is supported by local revenues ($36,000), there still is not enough money to find all of the activities which the Specialist would like to see in Sterling.

Despite funding difficulties and interagency problems, the Office of the Youth Specialist demonstrates the high priority given youth matters in this region. It also should prove a good foundation through which new ideas for helping rural youth can be introduced to the area.

* U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1979 - 311-379/1692

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